

United States Zero Hunger Pathways Project: Profile of Food Insecurity in America

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The United States Zero Hunger Pathways Project: Profile of Food Insecurity in America details a situational analysis on the state of hunger in the United States. The Zero Hunger Pathways Project was created by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network USA to unite research institutions and work towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger. This goal seeks to eradicate hunger by 2030, though food insecurity has exacerbated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of the situational analysis is to apply a systematic approach to ending hunger, develop a baseline report that describes the current state of hunger, and create the foundation for an actionable plan to end hunger in the United States. The working group that led the project includes Alicia Powers, Bassel Daher, Asma Lateef, and Caroline Fox. The working group sought to incorporate four core values that reflect the future of the United States food system: sustainability, health, equity, and resiliency. The four values directed the organization of the situational analysis.

The situational analysis is a baseline report describing the current state of hunger in the United States. Articles gathered for analysis were chosen based on three criteriums: applicability to the topic, credibility of the source, and relativity to the current state of hunger. The chosen articles were synthesized to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the multidimensional aspects of hunger. The multidimensional aspects under review include poverty, race/ethnicity, education, unemployment, homelessness, and COVID-19. The draft was then presented in a Dialogue Series that sought feedback from experts in varied fields.

The situational analysis demonstrated that food insecurity disproportionately affects specific populations within the United States, particularly Black and Latino Americans. The review also demonstrated the extensive cost of food insecurity. Though the monetary cost can be quantified to \$29 trillion USD, the true cost of hunger is much deeper and is expressed through impacts such as attention deficits, loss in economic productivity, and mental health conditions (Hendricks, et al., 2021). The feedback from Dialogue Series participants included clearly differentiating COVID-19's impact on food insecurity in comparison to the previous prevalence of food insecurity in the United States. In addition, the citation of more literature was suggested.

The situational analysis is only one tenet of the Zero Hunger Pathways Project. In addition to this baseline report, the working group conducted other Dialogue Series that addressed various topics related to food insecurity and food systems. These include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Recommendations, Trade-Offs Evaluations and Science-Policy Communications, and Taking Innovations to Scale. These Dialogue Series, in addition to the situational analysis, support the claim that to achieve Zero Hunger in the United States by 2030, research and policy must seek to make food systems equitable, resilient, healthy, and sustainable.

Statement of Research Advisor

Cat provided tremendous leadership to drafting, seeking feedback, and finalizing the situational analysis for inclusion on the United States Zero Hunger Pathways Project final report. Initially, Cat led a group of peers in conducting a comprehensive and critical review of literature to support the first draft of the situational analysis. Cat then facilitated receipt of feedback through

conduct of a dialogue that many food security experts throughout the United States attended. Following receipt of feedback, Cat then revised and finalized the situational analysis.

-Alicia Powers, *Hunger Solutions Institute*

References

[1] Hendricks, S., Ruiz, A., Acosta, M., Baumers, H., Galgani, P., Mason-D’Croz, D. ... Watkins, M. (2021). *The True Cost and True Price of Food*.

Authors Biography



Cat Powers is a recent graduate with a B.S. degree in Global Studies at Auburn University. She served as the First Author for this situational analysis.



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